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I Never Thought I Could Change a Life

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Andrews University student Nicole Niere is serving in Palau this year.

I never thought I could change a life

One student's experience as a missionary

Junior social work major Joanna Rivera chose to serve as a student missionary in the Rocky Mountain Conference (RMC) as administrative assistant to the youth department. Based in Colorado, the RMC also includes parts of Wyoming and New Mexico.

"Our goal in the youth department was to make it easy for kids to come closer to God," she explains. "We did many different things — events for youth, mission trips, summer camps, camporees, preaching, and spending time with the conference youth in any way we could."

Rivera was thrilled to experience something new and different in her life. Though she had originally planned to go overseas and serve in a different country, she felt God calling her to stay in the U.S.

"Probably what scared me the most was not knowing exactly what to expect," she says. "I was stepping outside of my comfort zone and I knew I'd be challenged in ways I couldn't predict."

Fear of the unknown wasn't the only serious hesitation Rivera had.

"I had this idea that in order to be a student missionary I needed to have a strong walk with God," she says. "I was worried my walk was not strong



Andrews University student Bajel Markland is serving in Chile this year.

enough and, as a result, God would not be able to use me."

After her service year, Rivera felt God calling her to stay longer, so she signed up for a second year.

"God can use you anywhere," she says. "It doesn't matter in what part of the world you are; if you want to serve others, God will find a way. God does not expect you to be perfect to be a missionary; if you have the desire, he will use you. I honestly never thought that I could truly change and impact someone's life. After reflecting on my time as a missionary, I was able to see how God used me to help others. I realized the power of youth ministry and how influential a single person can be."

This year, Andrews University sent out 23 student missionaries to serve in various capacities in various places.

"The mission of the Office of Campus Ministries is to prepare students for ministry no matter what their career goal," says June Price, University chaplain. "We want to engage, enrich and inspire students, and challenge them to not only be spiritually fed, but to feed others; a challenge to truly encounter the Creator."

The student missions program needs your support. Support means more than just financial contribution;

you also can help by praying, recruiting, writing letters of encouragement to current SMs, inviting past SMs to speak in your church, and sending care packages to those currently serving.

To learn more about being or supporting a student missionary, email sm@andrews.edu or call 269-471-3211.

Becky St. Clair, media communications manager, Division of Integrated Marketing & Communication



Andrews University student Jessica Yoon is serving in Poland this year.



Andrews University student Joanna Rivera served in Colorado for two years.